



Existing Conditions and Needs Assessment

Perkins&Will

Work Done to Date

1. Site Visit
2. Base Mapping
3. Site Analysis
4. Community Needs Analysis
5. Preliminary Stakeholder Meetings
6. Stakeholder Interviews



What We Heard from Stakeholders:

1. Park should be preserved in natural state as much as possible – have passive recreation focus.
2. Park should serve as common ground for city- connect community together.
3. Connectivity of trails to city wide trail network is important.
4. Important to open park up so people can see it since it is buried behind back yards.
5. There should be equity in development- prioritize development of south side of park.
6. Create places for people to gather like picnic pavilions.
7. Consider a food forest, to provide access for fresh food for adjacent communities.
8. Consider safety of park visitors in park planning and design
9. Lots of young families in area- prioritize programs that appeal to them.

Agenda

- Part 1** Key Findings: Site Assessment
- Part 2** Key Findings: Community Needs Assessment
- Part 3** Preliminary Big Ideas for Consideration

Purpose

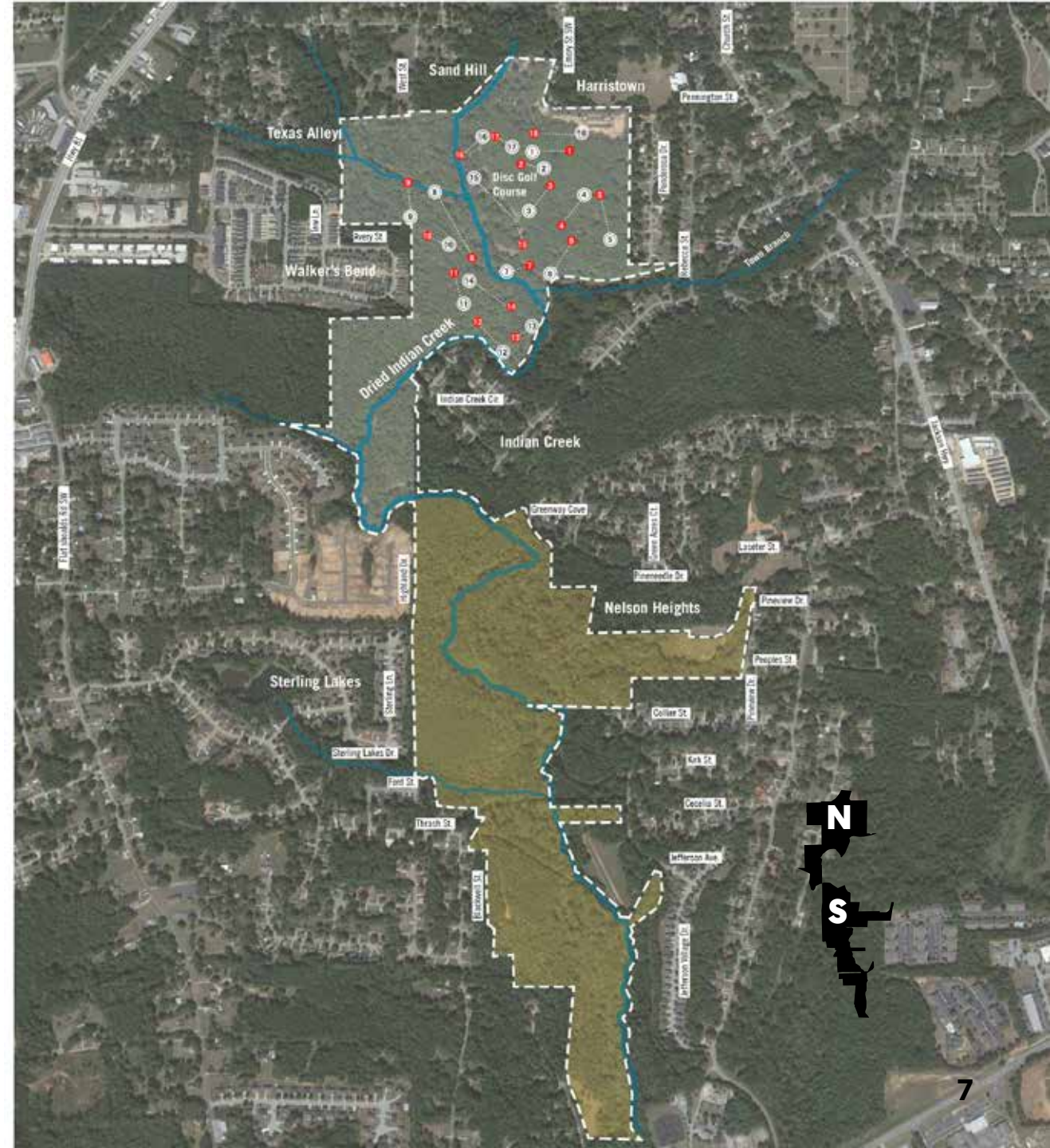
1. To review key findings from the Site and Community Assessment studies
2. To gather feedback on preliminary "Big Ideas"
3. Reach consensus on what would be included in the community survey (program elements, etc).

PART 1

Site Assessment: Key Insights

**KEY SITE INSIGHT #1:
PARK BOUNDARIES**

**Site is long and thin with
distinct north and south
sections.**



KEY SITE INSIGHT #2:
EXISTING FACILITIES

The Disc Golf Course and Playground are popular existing amenities within the park.

The Disc Golf Course has been a success, bringing in people into Covington from the broader region.



**KEY SITE INSIGHT #3:
ECOLOGICAL VALUE**

Covington Central Park is a beautiful, peaceful escape into nature in the heart of the City.

Its cultivation as an ecological preserve as well as a park will help protect the Ocmulgee River basin while offering recreational opportunities to neighbors, City residents, and the broader region.




KEY SITE INSIGHT #4:

TERRAIN

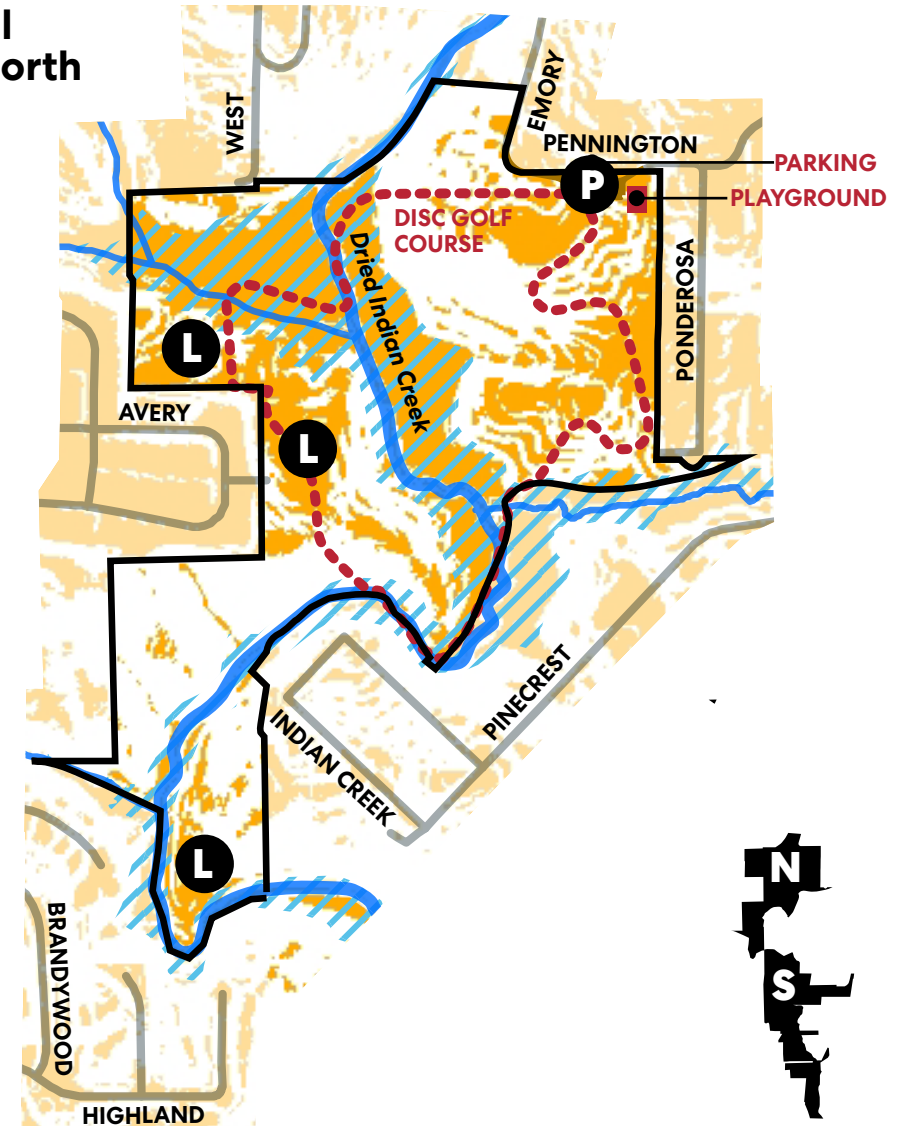
The Park has little flat or low-sloping land that is not in the creek flood zone. The steep terrain makes program elements such as large lawns and play courts challenging to implement.

As such, the site is best suited for passive recreation or small scale active recreation activities.

Flat / Non-Steep Areas

- 0 - 5% Slope within Current Park Boundary
- 0 - 5% Slope outside Current Park Boundary
- 5 to 50 percent slope ● L Level Area
- Creek  Creek Floodplain (500-year)
- Covington Central Park - - - Disc Golf Course

Central Park North



KEY SITE INSIGHT #4:
TERRAIN

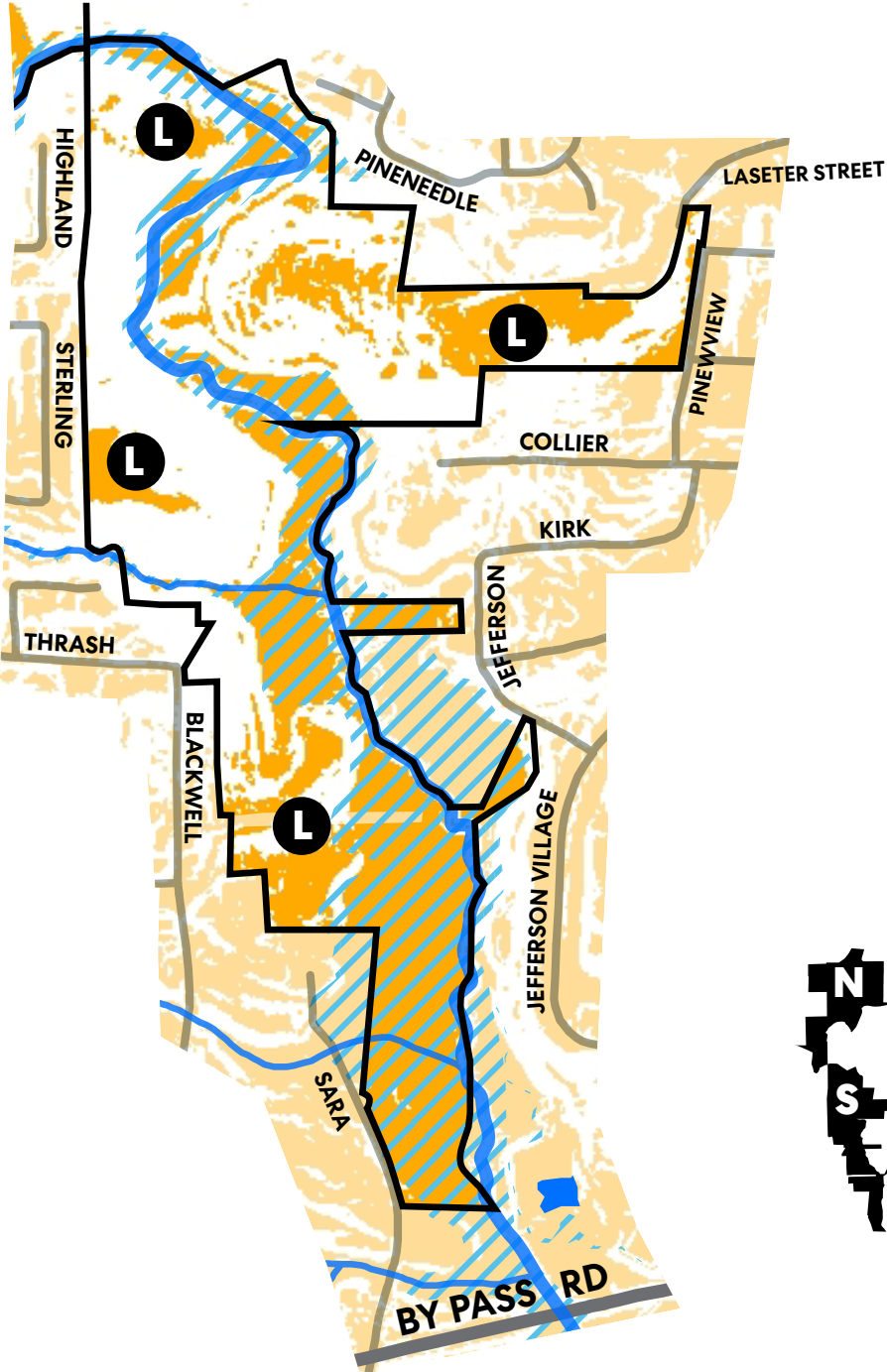
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- 0 - 5% Slope within Current Park Boundary
- 0 - 5% Slope outside Current Park Boundary
- 5 to 50 percent slope ● Level Area
- Creek ▨ Creek Floodplain (500-year)
- Covington Central Park Boundary

Central
Park South

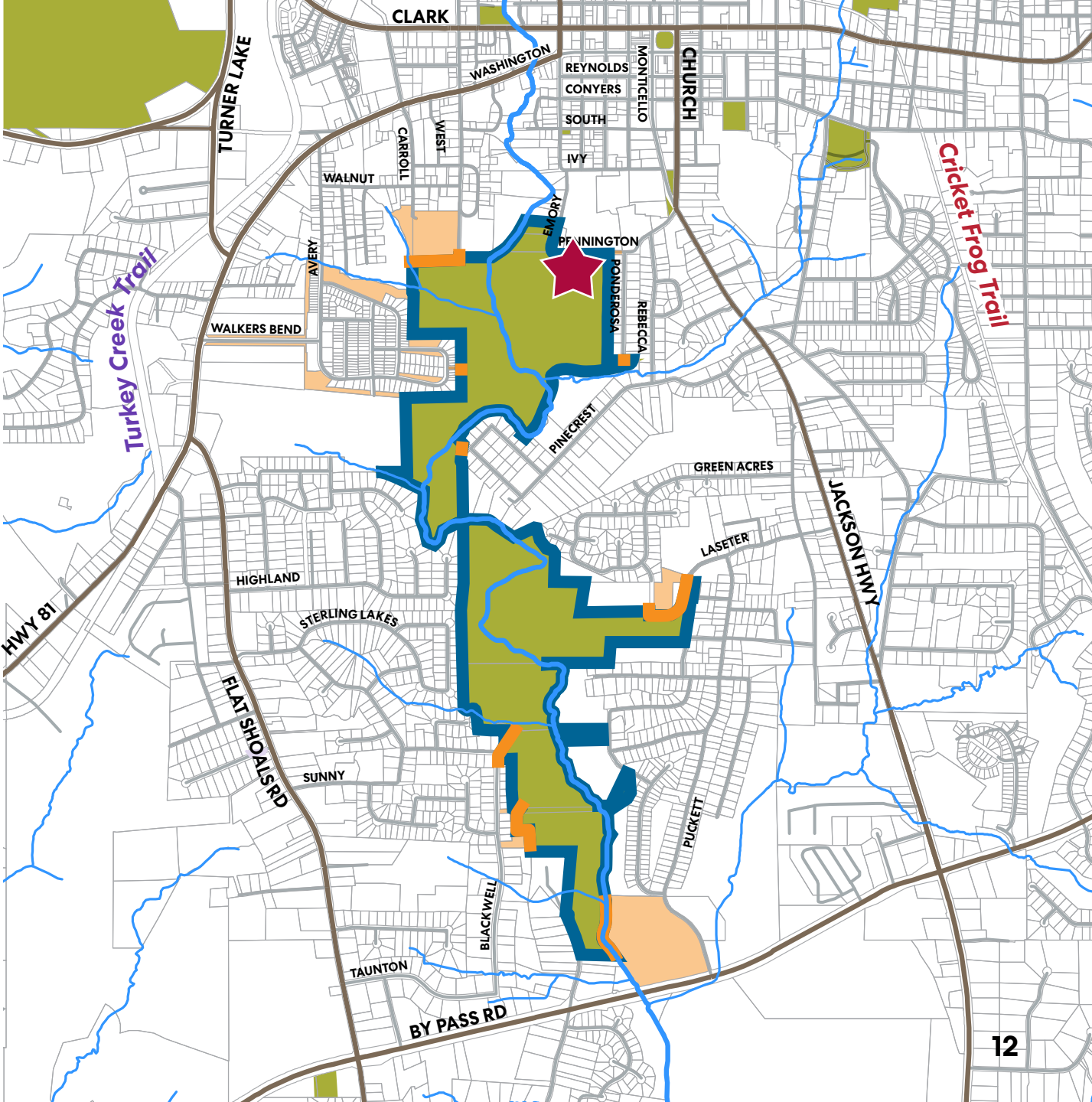


KEY SITE INSIGHT #5:
EDGES

The Park is landlocked: a majority of the Park edges abut private property in single-family residential subdivisions. Its lack of visibility and access from major thoroughfares may limit future potential.

Ownership

- ★ Existing Pennington St Entrance
- Edge of Private Parcel Abutting Park
- Edge of Publicly-Owned Parcel Abutting Park
- Public Ownership (City or County Owned Parcel)



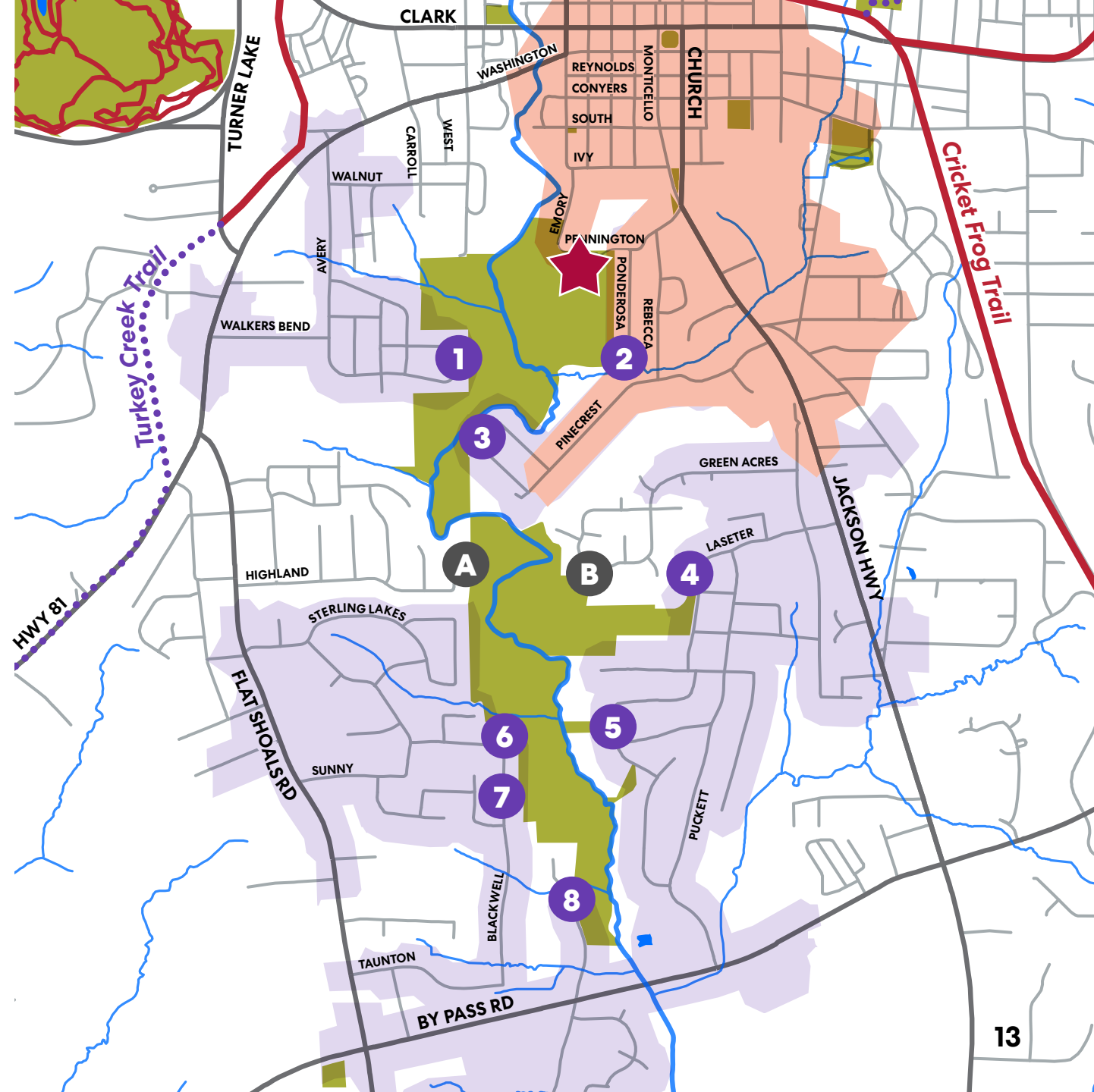
KEY SITE INSIGHT #6:

ACCESS

Given the lack of street connectivity, numerous access points will be required to provide access to residents in abutting subdivisions. Easements will be required to add more access points.

Slopes

- ★ Existing Pennington St Entrance
- 15-minute Walk from Existing Entrance
- # Potential Future Access Point from Public Right-of-Way or City-owned parcel
- 15-minute Walk from Potential Future Access Point
- A Easements required for access from subdivision
- Existing Trails Proposed Trails



Key Site Insights, Summary

- 1. PARK BOUNDARIES:** Site is long and thin with distinct north and south sections.
- 2. EXISTING FACILITIES:** The Disc Golf Course and Playground are popular existing amenities within the park.
- 3. ECOLOGICAL VALUE:** Covington Central Park is a beautiful, peaceful escape into nature in the heart of the City. Its cultivation as an ecological preserve as well as a park will help protect the Ocmulgee River basin while offering recreational opportunities to neighbors, City residents, and the broader region.
- 4. TERRAIN:** The Park has little flat or low-sloping land that is not in the creek flood zone. The steep terrain makes program elements such as large lawns and play courts challenging to implement.
- 5. EDGES:** The majority of the Park edges abut private property in single-family residential subdivisions. It is a “hidden gem”: lack of visibility and access from major thoroughfares may limit future potential.
- 6. ACCESS:** Given the lack of street connectivity, numerous access points will be required to provide access to residents in abutting subdivisions. Easements will be required to add more access points.

PART 2

Community Needs Assessment



Covington Central Park / Bridge over creek

METHODOLOGY

We will analyze community needs at three scales to maximize benefits of Covington Central Park:

1. Neighborhoods /

Covington residents within walking distance of the Park

2. City and County / Covington and Newton County residents within driving distance of the Park

3. Region / Day visitors from the Atlanta Region and beyond

COMMUNITY

The Neighborhood



Covington Central Park / Playground

COMMUNITY INSIGHT #1
DEMOGRAPHICS

Parkside neighborhoods are diverse, composed primarily of hard-working young families and senior householders with down-to-earth and semi-rural lifestyles.

Predominant ESRI Lifestyle Groups in the area:



“Hardscrabble Road”
Median Age: 32.4
Median Household Income: \$28,200
Avg Family Size: 2.66



“Small Town Simplicity”
Median Age: 40.8
Median Household Income: \$31,500
Avg Family Size: 2.26



“American Dreamers”
Median Age: 32.5
Median Household Income: \$50,900
Avg Family Size: 3.19



“Up and Coming”
Median Age: 31.4
Median Household Income: \$72,000
Avg Family Size: 3.12



“Middleburg”
Median Age: 36.1
Median Household Income: \$59,800
Avg Family Size: 2.75



“Traditional Living”
Median Age: 35.5
Median Household Income: \$39,300
Avg Family Size: 2.51

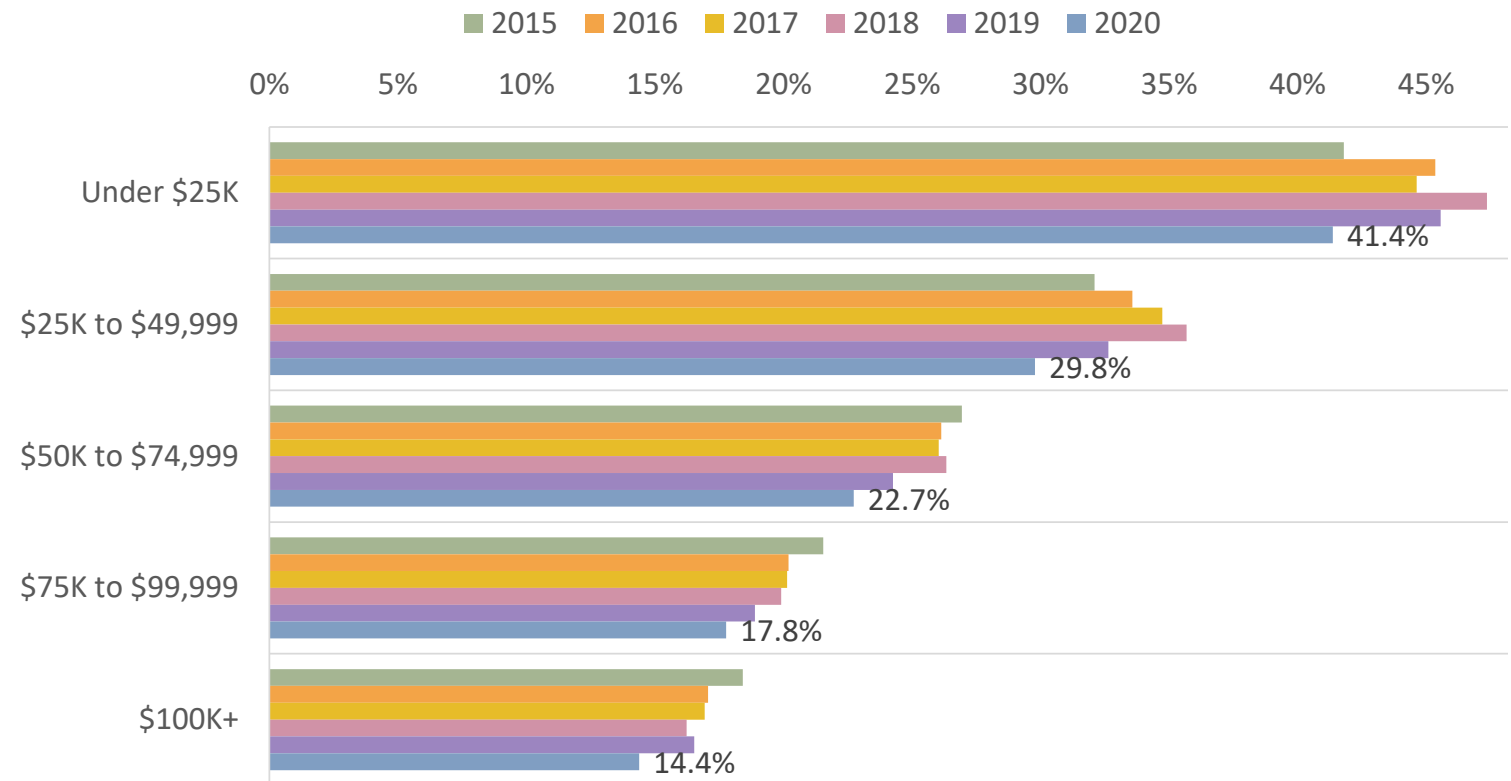
COMMUNITY INSIGHT #2

DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

Many families in the area live below the poverty level, and are therefore more vulnerable to negative health impacts related to physical inactivity.

Research shows that income is directly correlated with level of inactivity, which is known to contribute to preventable chronic diseases such as obesity and diabetes.

2015-2020 Inactivity by Income
(Source: Physical Activity Council, 2021)

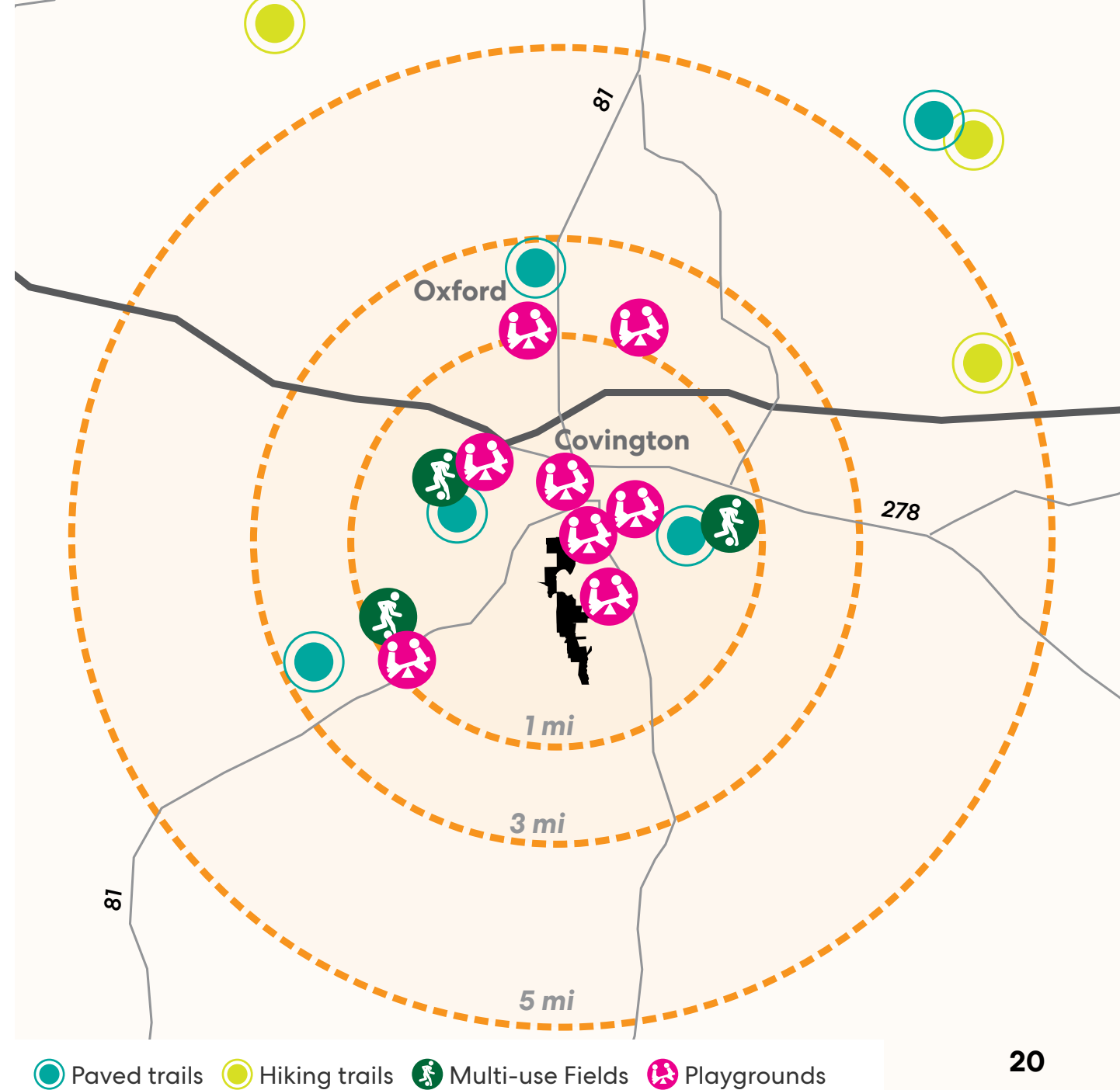


COMMUNITY INSIGHT #3

LOCAL AMENITIES

While there are a variety of family-friendly recreational assets in and around the City, distances may be too far for those who don't drive.

Residents with limited incomes and limited time due to work schedules, and those who are younger (only a third of 16-19 year olds have licenses) will benefit from having recreational facilities within walking distance of neighborhoods.



COMMUNITY INSIGHT #4

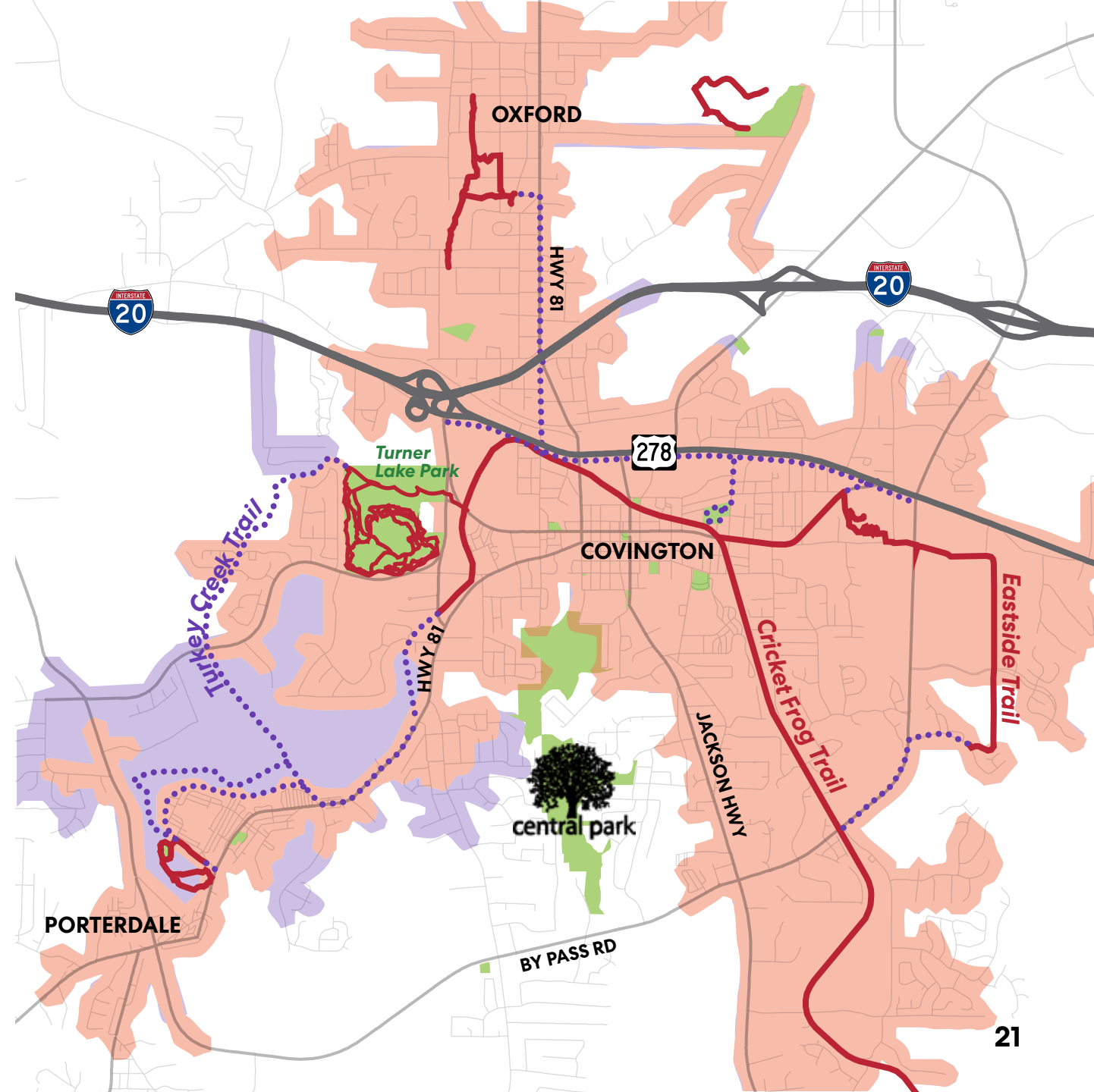
EXISTING TRAILS

Parkside Neighborhoods are not fully served by existing or proposed trail networks in Covington.

Future Central Park trails can provide neighbors access to nature while also enabling car-free trips to area destinations through connections to existing trails.

Trails Service Area Analysis

- Existing Trails ••• Proposed Trails
- Areas within 15 minute walk of existing trails
- Areas within 15 minute walk of proposed trails
- Existing Parks



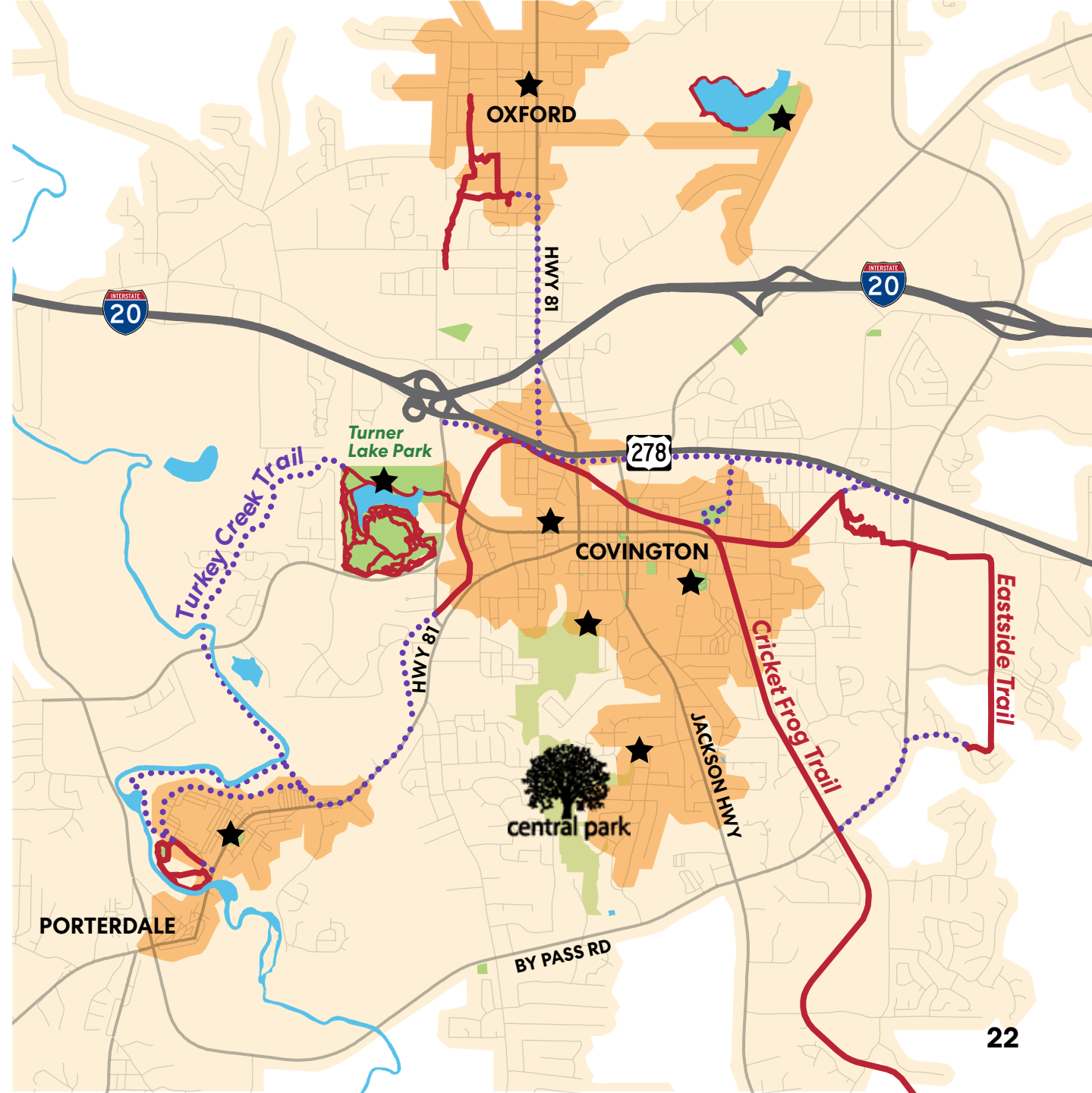
COMMUNITY INSIGHT #5 EXISTING PLAYGROUNDS

While playgrounds are available to most within a short drive, not all families can walk to a playground.

A new playground in Central Park, strategically co-located with trails, can improve playground access for families, particularly those who live to the west. Availability and quality of sidewalk connections should also be considered.

Playgrounds Service Area Analysis

- ★ Existing Playgrounds ● Existing Parks
- Orange Area: Areas within 15 minute walk of existing playgrounds
- Light Orange Area: Areas within 5 minute drive of existing playgrounds
- Red Line: Existing Trails Purple Dotted Line: Proposed Trails



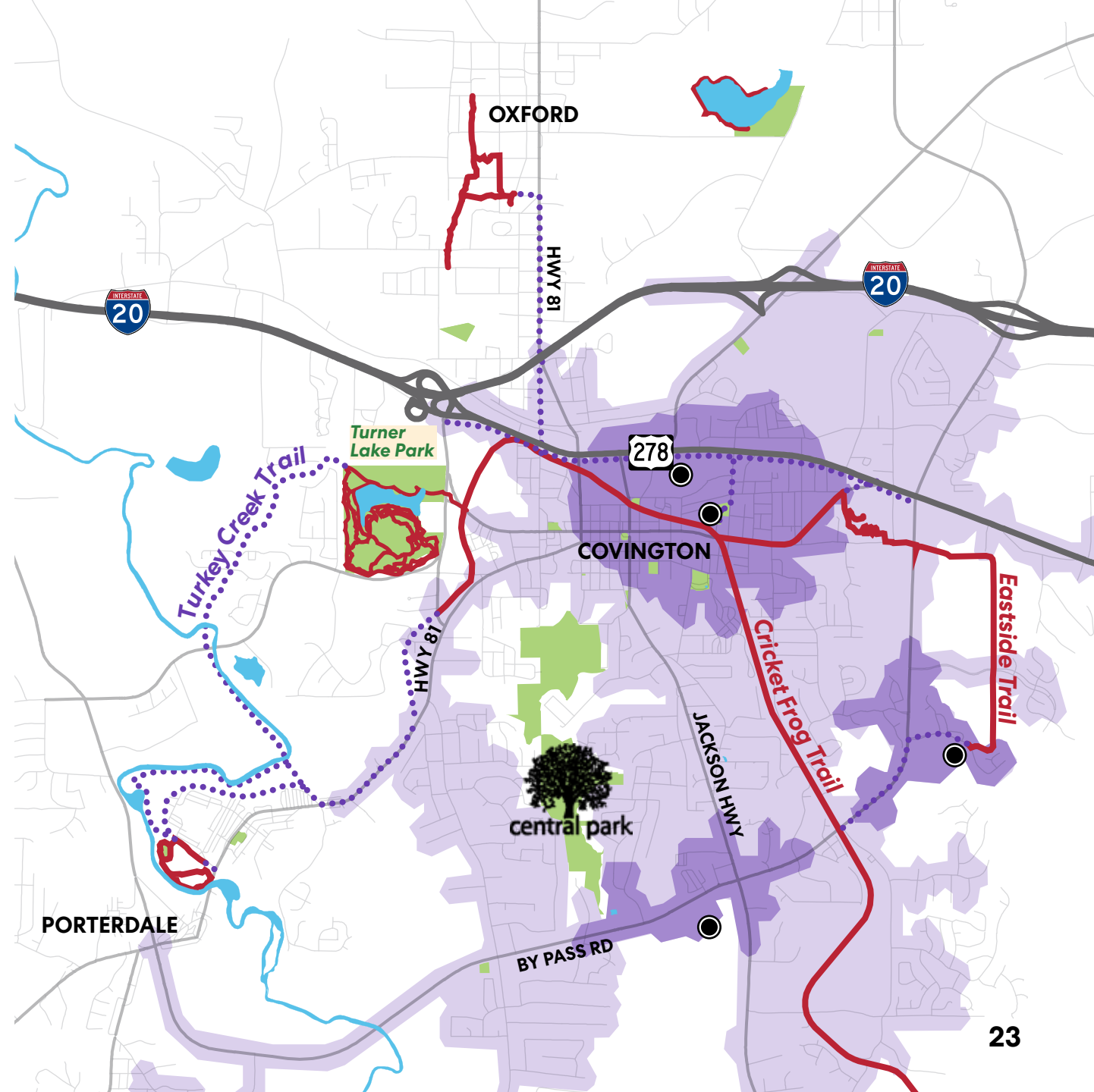
COMMUNITY INSIGHT #6

MULTI-USE FIELDS

While the area has a good supply of single use athletic fields for activities like baseball/softball, there is an opportunity for additional flexible fields for activities.

Playgrounds Service Area Analysis

- Existing Multi-Use Fields ● Existing Parks
- Areas within 15 minute walk of existing multi-use fields
- Areas within 5 minute drive of existing multi-use fields
- Existing Trails ●●● Proposed Trails



COMMUNITY INSIGHT #7

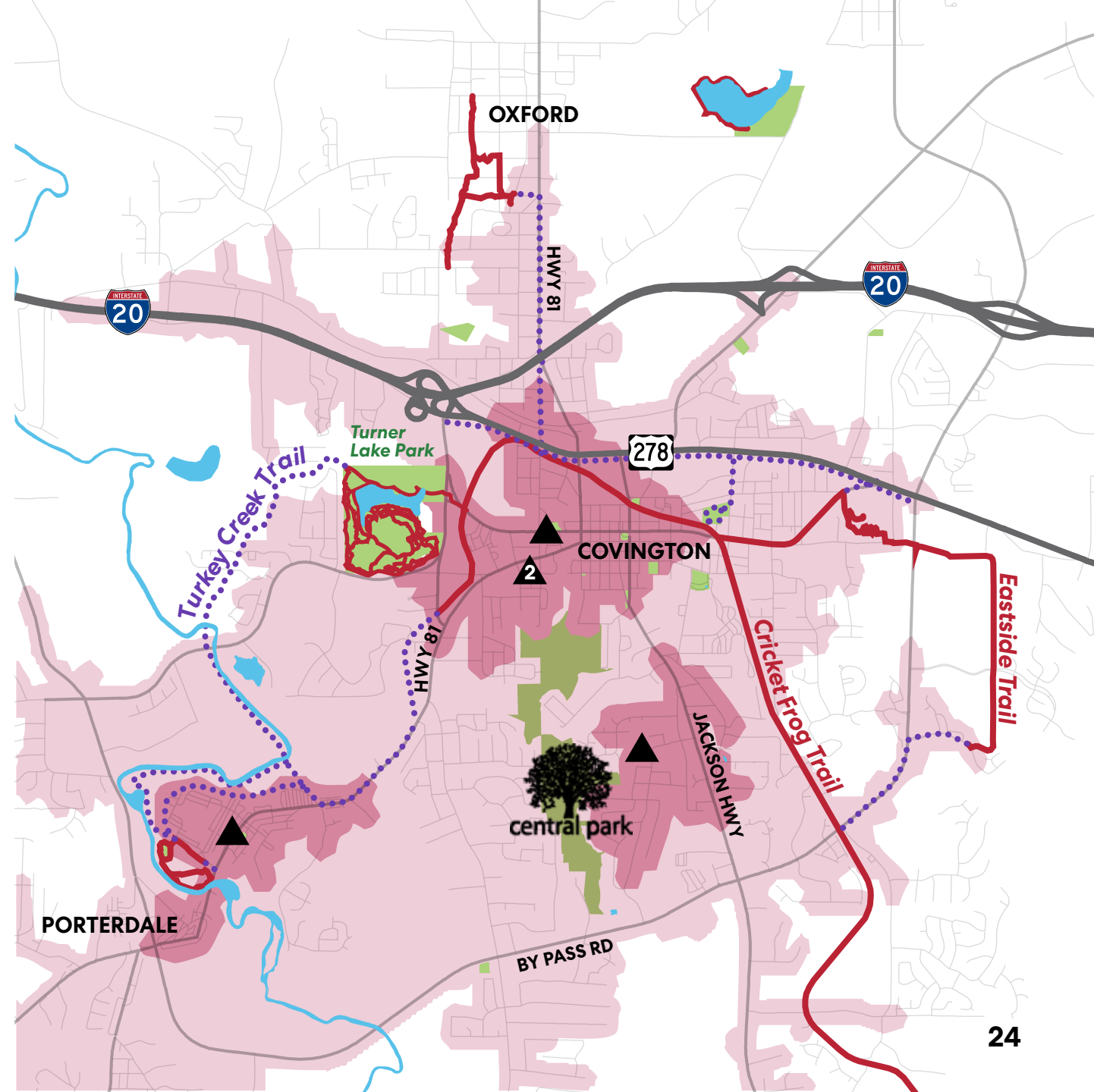
BASKETBALL COURTS

Areas west of Central Park do not have basketball courts within walking distance.

While a trail across Central Park can link these homes to the new basketball court at the Nelson Heights Community Center, additional or improved courts are likely to be utilized given the popularity of the sport among children and youth (see page 29).

Basketball Courts Service Area Analysis

- ▲ Existing Basketball Courts
- Existing Parks
- Areas within 15 minute walk of existing basketball courts
- Areas within 5 minute drive of existing basketball courts
- Existing Trails
- ... Proposed Trails



COMMUNITY

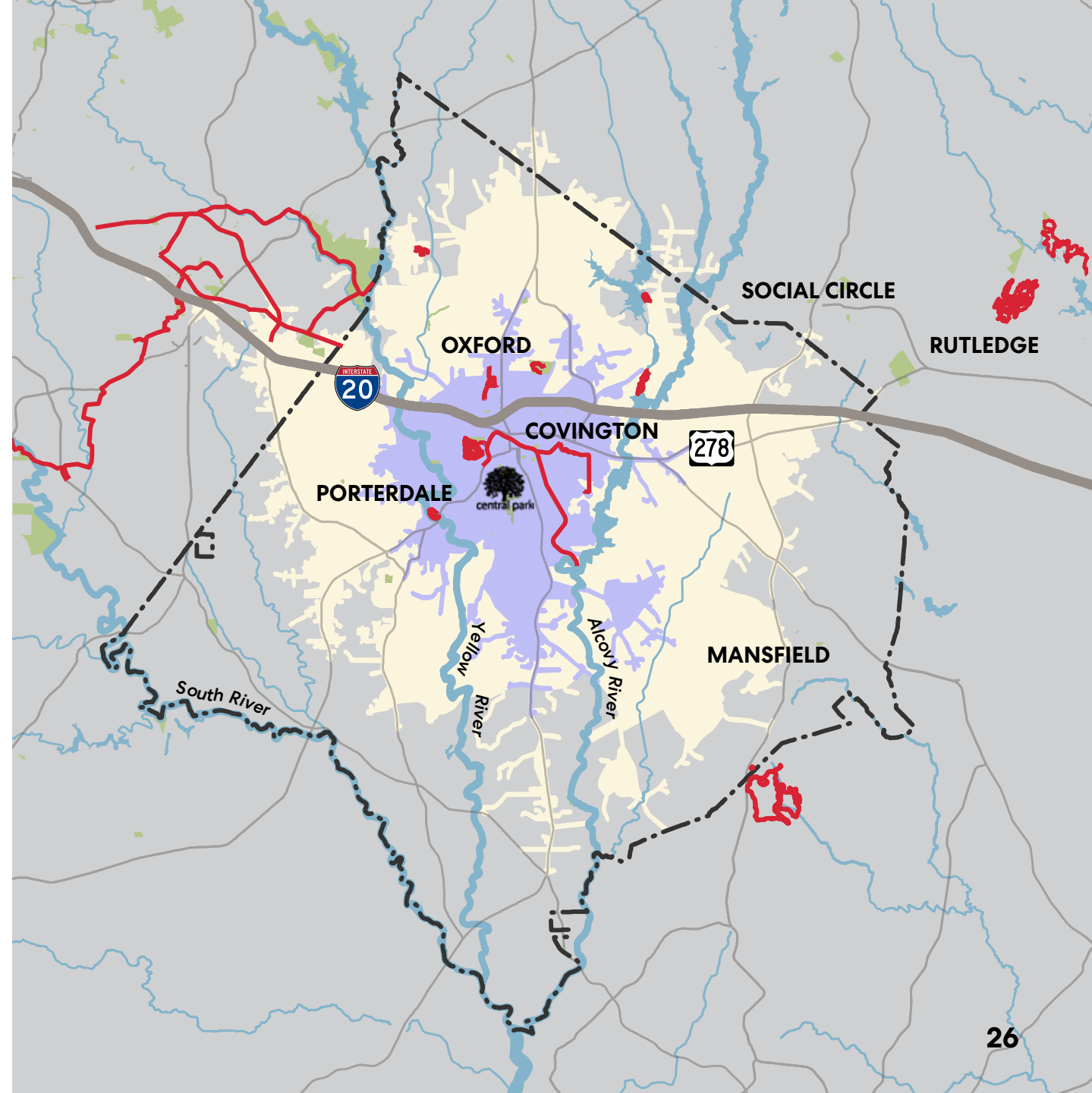
The City and County



KEY COMMUNITY INSIGHT #8:
SERVICE AREA, FACILITIES

Covington Central Park
is accessible within a
15-minute drive for the
majority of Newton county
residents.

-
- Newton County Boundary
 - 10-Minute Driving Distance from Central Park
 - 15-Minute Driving Distance from Central Park
 - Existing Trails
 - Major Rivers and Creeks
 - Existing Parks



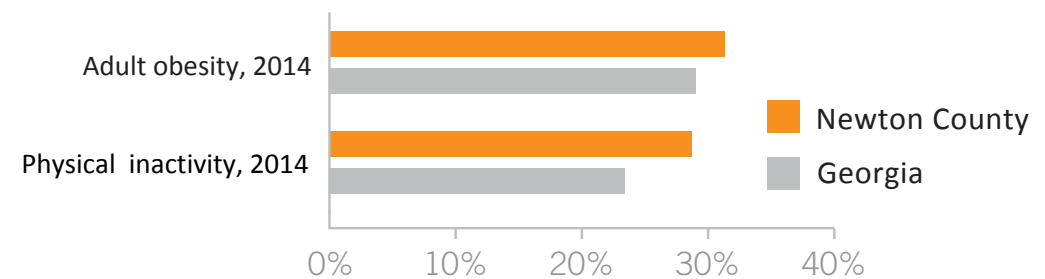
KEY COMMUNITY INSIGHT #9:
HEALTH

Newton County has a higher rate of obesity than the state and national averages, which is correlated with built environment barriers to a healthy lifestyle.

Increasing opportunities for physical activity is a priority for all in the community.

“ In comparison with the other 159 Georgia counties, Newton County rank 127th for physical environment, with limited access to healthy foods and access to parks and recreational facilities, and a high rate of fast food restaurants and long commutes. ”

*Piedmont Newton Hospital
Community Health Needs Assessment, 2019*



**KEY COMMUNITY INSIGHT #10:
SERVICE AREA DEMOGRAPHICS**

20,000+ residents* live within a 10-minute drive of Covington Central Park.

Within this driveshed, Covington and Newton County residents enjoy facilities on par with averages reported by National Recreation Parks Association (NRPA) member parks.

NRPA-MEMBER AVERAGE FOR 20,000 RESIDENTS	CITY OF COVINGTON / NEWTON COUNTY FACILITIES WITHIN 10-MIN DRIVE OF CENTRAL PARK
10 parks (200 acres)	10 parks (516 acres)**
6-8 playgrounds	8 playgrounds***
2-3 totlots	2 totlots
3-5 basketball courts	4 basketball courts****
5-7 tennis courts	4 tennis courts

* 1/5 of County Population. City population is 13,967 (2019).

** Includes the following: City Pond Park, Covington Central Park, Turner Lake Park, Trailblazer Park, Academy Springs Park, Covington Town Square, B. C Crowell Park, Mary Louise Fowler Park, McGoo Park, South Street Park. The area includes an additional 40 acres of recreational playfields.

*** At least two additional playgrounds are available at public elementary schools.

**** The two basketball courts located at the Washington Street Community Center are in disrepair.

KEY COMMUNITY INSIGHT #11:
NATIONAL TRENDS

The national Physical Inactivity Council survey has shown basketball, running/jogging, and hiking, as top preferred activities among different age groups.

All of these activities have been mentioned as program elements for Central Park.

2015-2020 Intent to Participate in the Next 12 Months, by Age
(Source: Physical Activity Council, 2021)

(Source: Physical Activity Council, 2021)

Intent Level					
	Ages 6 to 12	Ages 13 to 17	Ages 18 to 24	Ages 25 to 34	
	1	Basketball	Basketball	Running/Jogging	Running/Jogging
	2	Soccer	Fishing	Yoga	Hiking
	3	Fishing	Running/Jogging	Hiking	Cardio Fitness
	4	Camping	Camping	Working out with weights	Yoga
	5	Baseball	Hiking	Cardio Fitness	Working out with weights
	6	Hiking	Working out with weights	Working out using machines	Camping
	7	Tennis	Soccer	Basketball	Fishing
	8	Swimming for fitness	Tennis	Camping	Working out using machines
	9	Running/Jogging	Working out using machines	Fishing	Basketball
10	Golf	Baseball	Swimming for fitness	Swimming for fitness	

Intent Level					
	Ages 35 to 44	Ages 45 to 54	Ages 55 to 64	Ages 65+	
	1	Hiking	Hiking	Hiking	Fishing
	2	Yoga	Fishing	Fishing	Hiking
	3	Camping	Working out with weights	Working out with weights	Working out using machines
	4	Cardio Fitness	Camping	Working out using machines	Working out with weights
	5	Working out with weights	Cardio Fitness	Cardio Fitness	Swimming for fitness
	6	Running/Jogging	Yoga	Camping	Cardio Fitness
	7	Fishing	Working out using machines	Swimming for fitness	Yoga
	8	Working out using machines	Running/Jogging	Yoga	Camping
	9	Swimming for fitness	Swimming for fitness	Golf	Golf
10	Basketball	Bicycling	Running/Jogging	Shooting	

COMMUNITY

The Region



COMMUNITY INSIGHT #12

The region is endowed with breathtaking natural recreation sites that vary in offerings and scenery, including destination parks within 15-20 minutes drive of Covington.

Covington residents who do not drive, have access to a car, or have time to travel for recreation can enjoy activities in nature at the Central Park. Central Park's size and offerings, however, will not compete well in the league of some of these regional destinations.



Charlie Elliot Wildlife Center (21 minute drive)



Hard Labor Creek State Park (22 min drive)



Georgia International Horse Park (15 min drive)



Arabia Mountain Park (24 min drive)



EXISTING RECREATIONAL AMENITIES / REGION

- Trails
- Skate Parks
- Parks
- Newton County
- Mountain Bike Trails

LEGEND

- Mountain biking trails
- Skate parks
- Tree top obstacle course
- Covington Central Park

COMMUNITY INSIGHT #13

There are opportunities to incorporate unique programs, such as a skate park, that are not currently provided in Newton and surrounding counties.

The Disc Golf Course is an example of an amenity that attracts visitors from outside of county boundaries to spend money in town, supporting local businesses. Other opportunities may be defined through partnerships and could include outdoor art installations, history exhibits, exercise nodes, tree top obstacle course and curated wellness programming.



Old Fourth Ward Skate Park / Atlanta, GA



Atlanta BeltLine / Free Fitness



Tree top obstacle course/ Dunwoody, GA



BHNP Summer Day Camp

Community Insights, Summary

NEIGHBORHOOD SCALE

1. Parkside neighborhoods are diverse, composed primarily of hard-working young families and senior householders with down-to-earth and semi-rural lifestyles.
2. Many families in the area live below the poverty level, and are therefore more vulnerable to negative health impacts related to physical inactivity.
3. While there are a variety of family-friendly recreational assets in and around the City, distances may be too far for those who don't drive.
4. While playgrounds are available to most within a short drive, not all families can walk to a playground.
5. Parkside Neighborhoods are not fully served by existing or proposed trail networks in Covington.
6. While the area has a good supply of single use athletic fields for activities like baseball/softball, there is an opportunity for additional flexible fields for activities.
7. Areas west of Central Park do not have basketball courts within walking distance

Community Insights, Summary

CITY / COUNTY SCALE

- 8. Covington Central Park is accessible within a 15-minute drive for the majority of Newton county residents.
- 9. Newton County has a higher rate of obesity than the state and national averages, which is correlated with built environment barriers to a healthy lifestyle. Increasing opportunities for physical activity is a priority for all in the community.
- 10. 20,000+ residents* live within a 10-minute drive of Covington Central Park. Within this driveshed, Covington and Newton County residents enjoy a greater number of facilities than averages reported by National Recreation Parks Association (NRPA) member parks.
- 11. The national Physical Inactivity Council survey has shown basketball, running/jogging, and hiking, as top preferred activities among different age groups.

Community Insights, Summary

REGIONAL SCALE

12. The region is endowed with breathtaking natural recreation sites that vary in offerings and scenery, including destination parks within 15-20 minutes drive of Covington.
13. There are opportunities to incorporate unique programs, such as a skate parks, that are not provided in Newton and surrounding counties.

PART 3

Preliminary Big Ideas for Discussion

Preliminary Big Ideas, for Discussion

To make Central Park a community / regional destination, we must:

1. Define a 21st century idea for a “Central Park” that is right for Covington
2. Preserve, highlight, and celebrate Dried Indian Creek as the central feature of the Park with a focus on ecology and history
3. Make the park easy to access for the driving public
4. Make the park an integral part of the growing car-free transportation network in Covington
5. Promote a Culture of Health by piloting partnership programs that support healthy lifestyles
6. Build a Culture of Belonging and Inclusivity by establishing physical, social and cultural connections to the surrounding community
7. Create gateway elements that celebrate civic pride

BIG IDEA #1

Define a 21st century idea for a “Central Park” that is right for Covington

Potential areas of focus:

1. Preservation / nature education
2. Active programming to improve community health
3. History, art, and culture to foster a sense of belonging / identity
4. Revenue generating activities that can support park infrastructure, maintenance, and safety operations



BIG IDEA #1

Define a 21st century idea for a “Central Park” that is right for Covington

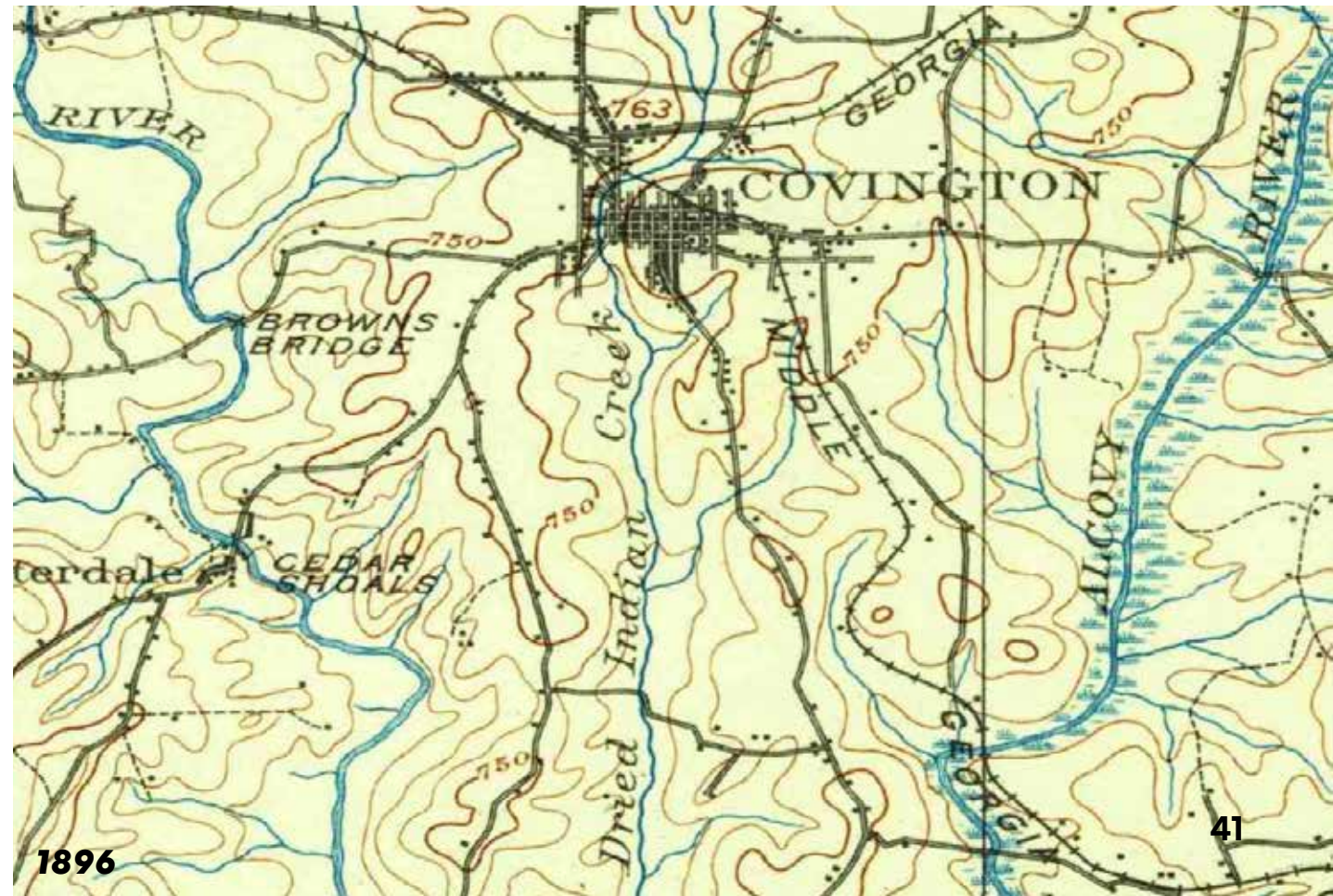


BIG IDEA #2

Preserve, highlight, and celebrate Dried Indian Creek as the central feature of the Park with a focus on ecology and history.

Potential strategies:

1. Highlighting the creek as the central design feature of the Park
2. Educational programming highlighting ecological functions
3. Balancing creek access with preservation requirements
4. Research and education on the role of the creek in Covington history, starting with the Creek nation



BIG IDEAS #3

Make the park easy to find and use for the driving public



Free standing sign



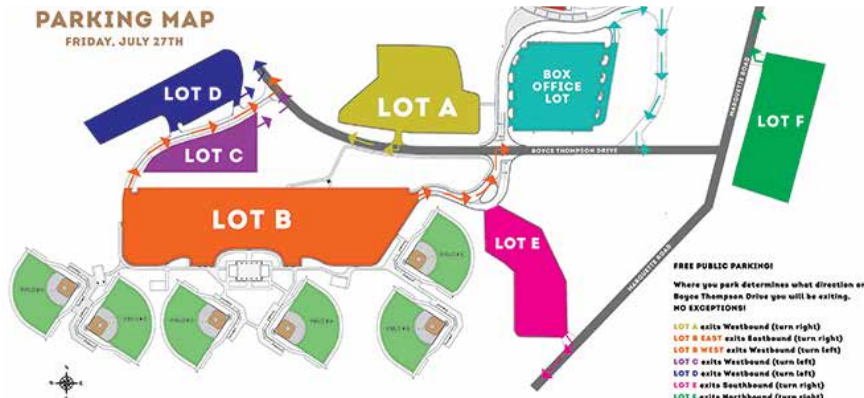
DIRECTIONAL
SIGNAGE FROM
MAJOR ROADWAYS



STRATEGICALLY-LOCATED
PARKING LOTS



Driving to Deer Park?
We've got directions!



PARKING MAP
FRIDAY, JULY 27TH



OVERFLOW PARKING FOR
SPECIAL EVENTS

BIG IDEA #4

Make the park an integral part of the growing car-free transportation network in Covington.

Potential strategies:

1. Incorporate paved trails into the park design with connections to existing trails
2. Neighborhood access to trails
3. Trail connections to existing sidewalk infrastructure
4. Trail connection to Downtown
5. Trail connections to area schools and community centers



CRICKET FROG TRAIL

BIG IDEA #5

Promote a Culture of Health with facilities and partnership programs that support healthy lifestyles.

DEKALB COUNTY
PARK PRESCRIPTION DAY
FOR IMPROVING HEALTH
SUNDAY, APRIL 28, 2019
Promoting Outdoor Activity to Improve Health

MASON MILL PARK 1340 McConnell Dr. Decatur, Ga. 30033 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Flagship Event	HAIRSTON PARK 889 S. Hairston Rd. Stone Mountain, Ga. 30088 2 p.m. - 3 p.m.	SCOTT PARK 231 Sycamore St. Decatur, Ga. 30030 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.
BOULDERCREST PARK 4184 Bouldercrest Park Rd. Ellenwood, Ga. 30294 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.	HENDERSON PARK 2723 Henderson Mill Rd. Atlanta, Ga. 30084 2 p.m. - 5 p.m.	SPRINGBROOK PARK 1512 Springbrook Dr. Decatur, Ga. 30033 12 p.m. - 4 p.m.
DAVIDSON-ARABIA MOUNTAIN NATURE PRESERVE 3787 Klondike Rd. Lithonia, Ga. 30038 8 a.m. (Walk Only)	MEDLOCK PARK 1031 Scott Cir. Decatur, Ga. 30033 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.	W.D. THOMSON PARK 1760 Mason Mill Rd., N.E. Decatur, Ga. 30033 12 p.m. - 2 p.m.
OLMSTED LINEAR PARK-DELLWOOD 1775 Ponce de Leon Ave. Atlanta, Ga. 30307 2 p.m. - 4 p.m.	ZONOLITE PARK 1101 Zonolite Pl., N.E. Atlanta, Ga. 30306 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.	

PARKS RX



WALK WITH A DOC



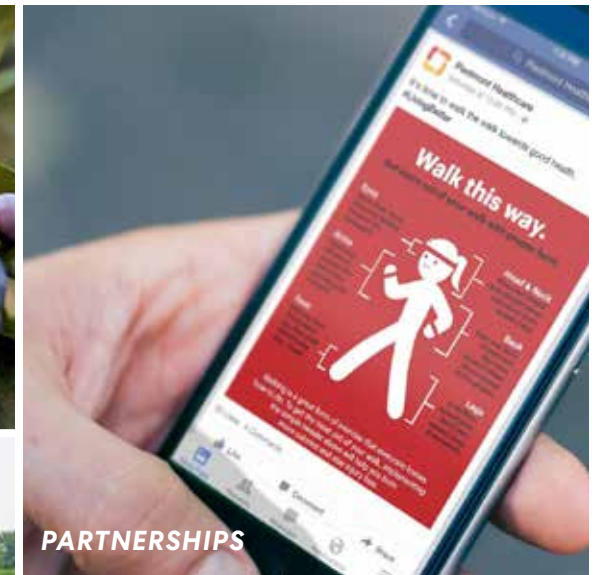
FOOD FOREST



FITNESS STATIONS



PARK YOGA

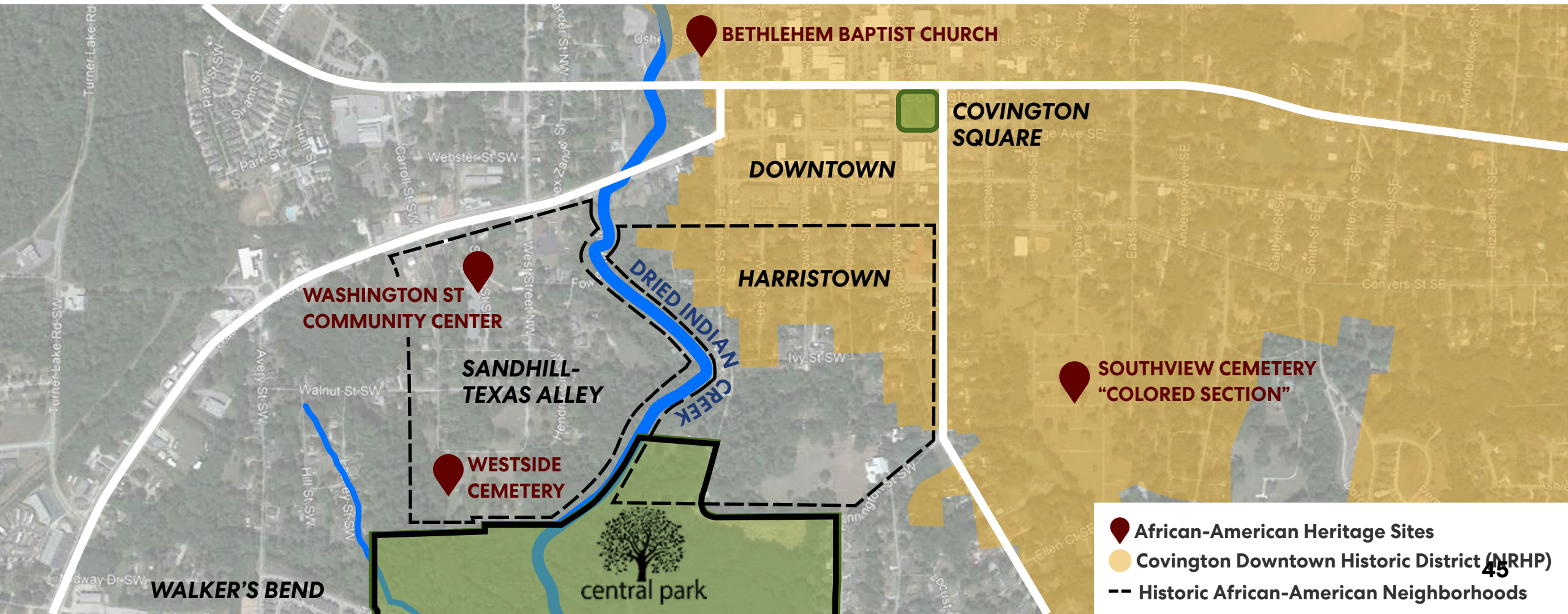


PARTNERSHIPS



BIG IDEA #6

Build a Culture of Belonging and Inclusivity by establishing physical, social and cultural connections to the place and the surrounding community



BIG IDEA #6

Build a Culture of Belonging and Inclusivity by establishing physical, social and cultural connections to the place and the surrounding community



FREEDOM PARK
ATLANTA, GA



CENTENNIAL OLYMPIC PARK
ATLANTA, GA



AFRICAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE TRAIL
SILVER SPRINGS PARK, SPRINGFIELD, MO



ATLANTA BELTLINE
EASTSIDE TRAIL



CHOCOLOCOCO PARK
OXFORD, AL

BIG IDEAS #7

Create gateway elements that celebrate civic pride

Potential strategies:

1. Create a brand identity for the Park that can be reflected in one or more civic gateways
2. Engage local partners to design and fund gateways



